

THE 1608/175.
ADVANTAGES
AND
DISADVANTAGES
OF THE
MARRIAGE-STATE;

As entered into with

Religious or Irreligious PERSONS;

Represented under the

SIMILITUDE of a DREAM.

*Favour is deceitful, and Beauty is vain: But a Woman
that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised, Prov. xxxi. 30.*



LONDON Printed: And

Dublin Re-printed: By Robert Jackson
Bookfeller in Meath-street, 1778.



Similitude of a D.R.E.M.

There is a small, very faint, and illegible inscription on the reverse of the coin, which is not shown in the illustration.

LONDON: Printed: And
Dublin Re-printed: By Robert Jackson
Bookseller in the Strand, 1772.

T H E

Advantages *and* Disadvantages

O F T H E

MARRIAGE-STATE, &c.

AS I walked thro' the wilderness of this World, I laid me down to sleep, and fancied myself travelling in the eastern parts of the world; and, at last, coming to the city of *Old Babylon*, where I was much amused in viewing the curiosities of the place, as the tower, the wall, the gates, the streets, the palace, the river, the images in the plain of *Dura*, &c. I observed the city, and it appeared in different views. In one part the people were entirely taken up in revellings, feasting, diversions, splendid appearances, and enjoying themselves. In the other part they were more reserved, and were much taken up in a demure dress and behaviour; in the decency of their houses and streets,

4 *Advantages and Disadvantages &c.*

and in the regularity of their towers and fortifications, &c. but without any appearance of dangers, alarms, or molestations; they seemed all entirely at ease.

Howbeit, when I had almost satiated myself with gazing on the particular shows, I thought to take a prospect of the whole city together. So I walked to a rising ground belonging to it, but a little retired from the crowd, where I saw a booth, which I took to be built on purpose for the conveniency of taking prospects, and I went directly to it. And at the door I saw an old man, of whom I enquired if he had a prospect glass, whereby I might be favoured with a full view of that royal city, which I supposed to be the metropolis of the world. He told me, if I pleased to take a deliberate observation, I might, perhaps, have different apprehensions of that splendid city, than I had at present; for he assured me it was so full of intestine perplexity, caused by envy, malice, excess, and corruption, that the inhabitants had no real satisfaction in themselves; and it was only by those extravagancies and amusements which I had seen, they kept themselves from perpetual distraction. He then fetched out his perspective, and told me, if I pleas'd, he would shew me the situation of the place; whereby I might be convinced that its condition was not so happy, nor its glory so majestic,



jestick, as I imagined. So I took a distinct view on the south-side, and the foundation of the place appeared to be built upon nothing but bogs and quick-sands, which could not possibly sustain the buildings, but ere long they must inevitably sink. I again took a view on the north-side, and I found the foundation was all bituminous and sulphureous matter interspersed with subterraneous fire, which appeared ready in a moment to break forth into flames. He then bid me look to the east; and I saw a very formidable army approaching the city, with full power and commission to destroy it; and they spread themselves around with fury, like the roaring of the sea. And there was a trembling upon all the hills, the rivers, the trees, and the fields round about; but all the inhabitants of the city continued in a stupefaction.

When I had beheld and deliberated on these things, it filled me with such astonishment as almost caused my bowels to turn within me. Such was my disappointment, and the horror that seized me, that I thought I was neither able to bear the sight, nor fly from it, nor stand my ground. And I asked the old man if I might lodge all night in that booth, but he told me it was not a place for lodging, nor would any person in his right mind think it safe to sleep so near the city; but,

but, if I pleas'd, I might come in and rest myself a little. And when I entered I found four young men very carefully perusing a map; seeming to make very particular remarks, and diligent observations, and would sometimes earnestly enquire the old man's judgment, to inform them of the meaning of some things. Whereupon I enquired what piece it was that so much attracted their attention. They told me it was the map of *Babylon* and *Canaan*, with all the roads between the two places. And they having had a full prospect of the same things which I had just now beheld, and being determined to leave their native country, and travel to the latter place, was the reason of their present enquiries; and the old man being a native of *Canaan*, and acquainted with both countries, as well as the roads from one to the other, they frequently applied to him for instruction in things difficult.

These four young men appeared so like each other in their apparel, their speech, and behaviour as well as some of their features, that I verily took them all to be own brothers, and I knew not any thing to the contrary, until I became acquainted with a certain person who had some knowledge of the places where they were born, and of the register

ter-books, He informed me that two of them were sons of the bond-woman, but the other two were the sons of the free-woman.

So I observed them, and they all made preparation, with seeming vigorous resolution, for their supposed journey. And amongst other consultations with the old man (their instructor) they earnestly craved his advice, whether it were expedient for each of them to take along with him a female companion? Which he very chearfully encouraged them to do, provided they were such as were disposed to go the same way, and had their hearts engaged to seek the same country along with them: but otherwise he admonished them (by all means) to avoid such companions as had no knowledge of, or delight in the way they designed to travel.

He pointed out to them many difficulties in the way, where the company of strangers would be of very dangerous consequence; told them the need they would find of strengthening and encouraging in the way, rather than hindring and discouraging; and reasoned much upon the evil that would attend (in many respects) such companions as took no delight in the way, and compared it with the advantages they might expect in the company of such as took pleasure, and would endeavour to animate them therein.

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He further informed them in many instances, what bad effects travellers who had formerly gone that way, had found from disagreeable companions: And that (to prevent the like inconveniencies) the king of the country had made a law, that none of his subjects should join with strangers to be companions in that journey, and therefore he earnestly cautioned them (whatever they did) to be exceeding careful in their choice.

I waited to see what influence this advice would have upon the minds of these young men. But I observed, that (at the first) none of them seemed to relish his counsel; for they had all either contracted some acquaintance with, or placed their fancy upon maids who were natives of *Babylon*, to whom their hearts were very inclinable. But the more they appeared engaged in their affections, the more their instructor insisted on the dangers and pernicious consequences which were most certain to attend their having such companions: And withal told them, the king had appointed one to attend them in their journey, whose name was *Self-Denial*, without whose company it would be impossible ever to reach the borders of *Canaan*; and that to choose a stranger for a companion, would be such an insult to him (at the first setting out) as might cause misunderstanding all the way. For his part, he

he told them, that to pretend to travel to *Canaan*, and choofe a *Babylonian* for a companion was fuch a contradiction, that he could not but very much doubt the fincerity of their hearts. For if it was poffible at all for a fincere traveller to choofe fuch a companion; (as he would not be too bold in his affertions) yet he was very certain it could not be, fo long as they continued in the right ufe of their reafon; and he muft difcharge his confcience in giving them timely admonition, &c.

I obferved the event of thefe confultations; and I found the eldeft fon of the bond-woman could not be moved by all thefe arguments; but refolutely chofe one who was an utter ftranger to the paths, nor had any delight in, or defire thereto: And when he had covenanted with her, fhe proved fo averfe to go along with him, and fo reluctant to his purfuing his intended journey, that fhe prevailed upon him to defift from his purpofe. So he fettled with her in *Babylon*, and they were both there when the city was deftroyed, and perifhed together in the ruins.

But the younger brother (Son of the bond-woman) took a little more regard to the counfel given him, and feemed more heedful in his choice; and (in a flight manner) fought to get a companion that would be willing to

go along with him. So, at last, he met with one who appeared compliable to his desire, though she had no knowledge of the way, nor any desire to it, only it seemed a matter indifferent; and, therefore, as he was inclined to undertake the journey, she would condescend to compliment him with her company. This pleased the young man very well, as he thought he should both gratify himself in the choice of a companion, and also act conformable to his directions. But he did not consider, that while her mind was possessed with such indifferency, her company must needs be very unprofitable: However, they joined hands; and she, (as good as her word) complimented him with her company; and they set out both together, as if they would proceed on their journey. But her indifferent mind soon prevailed so as to cool his warm affections, and caused their advances to be very slow. They would frequently sit down in the shade, and sometimes divert themselves with trifles, and often turn aside out of the way; which made their progress very small. And this manner of loitering prevailed more and more, until, at last, they came to the low valley, by the brink of the river *Euphrates*, where they turned aside and fell asleep; and while they slept there arose a swell in the river, and the flood swept them both away.

pass the river. Here his burdens dropped off, and all his clogs were left behind ; he went on with fresh vigour and chearfulness in his countenance, as if all things were forgotten, but the joy that was before him. But as he was taking some of his last steps, just ready to set his feet on *Canaan's* shore, he looked behind him, and saw her sitting upon the sand, and beheld the river returning with such an overflow, as carried her along the rapid stream into the dead sea.

As for the elder brother (Son of the free-woman) when he had heard the instructions and admonitions, it wrought some serious reflections in his mind, and made him very deliberate. Notwithstanding he was a person of a bright genius, great vivacity, and a fine taste ; he determined to deny himself ; so as when he saw the beauty and graceful mien, and heard the courteous conversation of the *Babylonish* maids, he would withdraw from them and turn away his eyes lest his heart should be ensnared. However, it sometimes fell in his way, to have conversation with some who appeared very agreeable and engaging, and might have some influence on his affections ; especially one, whose person, birth, circumstances, virtues and accomplishments, rendered her extremely agreeable, and made her appear very promising to make a valuable companion ; inso-

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much, that many of his acquaintance greatly encouraged him to pursue that opportunity, and not neglect so valuable a prize. This made him a little stagger (for indeed she wanted no accomplishment but the language of *Canaan* to make her just such an one as his heart could wish) which caused him to reason in his own mind, with such interrogations and replies, as these ;

Q. Can I expect to find an object more desirable, or one more likely to be a happy companion, and a help-meet ?

A. She may prove so to a person who can be conformable to stay with her in *Babylon* ; but as I am bound to another country, I might find bitterness in that which would appear happiness to another person.

Q. But have I not reason to hope, that a person of her refined qualities, may be indued with such blessings as to make her a suitable companion for me in my journey ?

A. A person may be accomplished with all the refinements improvements, and excellencies of *Babylon*, so as to appear superior to many of the citizens ; but if these be only the accommodations of their own country, they can only make a gradual difference

ference between them and the most abject peasants ; whereas there is necessarily a specific difference between a *Babylonian* and an *Israelite*.

Q. But is it not very censorious to look upon such a becoming worthy person, as no better than a meer *Babylonian* ?

A. Inasmuch as the difference is so great, that a *Babylonian* cannot become a subject of the king of *Israel*, unless he be formed anew ; we cannot esteem them any other, so long as there does not appear the specific features of the select nation ; neither the idiom of their language, the mien of their behaviour, nor yet an earnest enquiry after the desired land. For we are not to form our conceptions of them different from the descriptions given by the king's scribes.

Q. Is it not exceeding hard that I must deny myself an object so agreeable ?

A. The king of glory denies nothing that is good ; therefore, if it were really good, it would not be denied me ; he only denies us those things which he knows would be evil, and it is a real kindness to us to be denied them. But suppose I thought it a real good ; is it hard that he should deny me
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one favour, who has given himself to me, with all blessings in heaven and earth?

Q. What if I never find one so agreeable, who travels the happy road?

A. If I had the object now before me, it must entirely depend on the blessing of God, whether I should have any enjoyment or not; and have I not more reason to expect a blessing in the right way, than in the wrong? Beside, as no good thing is withheld, nor any thing denied, but because it is evil; whatever God is pleased to bestow in his own way must be most agreeable.

Q. May not the valuable qualifications, attending this person, be so blessed, as to be a means to make me happy and useful in the way, though she walk not in it herself?

A. Have I any reason to expect to be made happy by any person who is an utter stranger to those things wherein my happiness consists? Or can I expect to find usefulness in the way, from that which cannot be enjoyed or obtained without going out of the way? beside, whatever qualifications she is endued with, or however valuable accommodations she is possessed of, it never will be her inclination to employ those

those excellencies to assist others in a way which she herself hath no delight in.

Q. But seeing her disposition is so agreeably complaisant, and her mind so well qualified with natural virtues, and decorated with so many acquired ornaments, is there any reason to doubt, but that a person thus prepared will have a taste for learning and embracing the best things? And may I not, therefore, expect to be an instrument to engage her mind to walk the blessed way?

A. All the accomplishments that people can possibly receive from *Babylon*, can never prepare, qualify, or dispose them for travelling to *Canaan*; nor will it, by any means, induce or incline any person to receive the real knowledge or love of that country. Therefore those who are not powerfully called by the king's commandment, and inwardly attracted by a vital influence, can never be engaged by any other motive or persuasion whatsoever. For there is nothing in the nature of a *Babylonian* (without the inchoation of new principles) that is capable of attraction. But the more excellent her accomplishments are, the more strongly her mind will be cemented to that climate from which she received them. And on the other hand, as I formerly was a *Babylonian*, (tho' now blessed with new principles) the old

old tincture still remains in my nature, which (like so much tinder) is ready to kindle with every spark of *Babylonish* fire. Wherefore the greater excellencies she is embellished with, the greater influence it will have to draw me aside into her paths, and so put me in perpetual danger. For of this, I am infallibly assured, that they will draw away one's heart.

When he had thus reasoned with himself, he made a full pause? and appeared in a strong agitation of mind, and a paleness arose in his face. And I heard him sigh, and say to himself, "Whither has my mind "been roving!" and trembling, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and earnestly cried, "O God of all grace, deliver me "from temptation!" And from that time, he would never regard any of the damsels of the city; but said, he would wait till he should find a true companion, and till then he would walk alone.

So he went on his way rejoicing that he had escaped the snare, and carrying along with him this motto, "The Lord is my "portion;" enjoying great satisfaction in his own mind; saying to himself, if my king sees it good for me to walk alone, I know he will bless that state unto me; but if it be for my good to enjoy a companion, I know
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his goodness will provide one for me, without my going out of the way to find one.

But as he was thus going on his way, he observed a young virgin who was walking the same road, and he began to desire to be favoured with her company, but thought it advisable to be very deliberate, because many seem to walk the same road, who only go part of the way, and then turn off into some other path. Therefore he diligently observed, whether she closely attended to the right way. So he perceived her to take something out of her bosom, and diligently peruse it for awhile, and then put it into her bosom again, and pursue the straight path; whereupon he went up to her, and enquired where she was bound. She told him she was setting her face towards *Zion*. He asked her, what it was she had been perusing? And she shewed him, that it was the map of the road which she took along with her for her guide. He then began to enquire further, who she was, and whence she came? She told him, she was by birth a *Chaldean*; by education, and conversation, a *Babylonian*; but the king of *Israel* had sent for her, to go forth and seek a better country. He also asked, what expectations, or encouragement she had in taking such a journey? She told him, she had the king's word, to make her an inhabitant in his
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royal palace, when she arrived at the upper *Bethel*; and to grant her sufficient defence, and sustenance, all the way thither. He asked, if she could be fully satisfied in the king's veracity? She told him the frauds and jealousies of *Babylon*, had made such impressions upon her mind, that she had found it very difficult to believe him that could not lie; but the king had condescended to give her the strongest demonstrations of his fidelity; so that now she was convinced, she had no reason to doubt his goodness, for he had confirmed his promise with an oath, and had given her to see, that in his own records it was sealed with blood, and the counter-part he had written upon her breast, and sealed it in characters of life; and hitherto, she had found his word verified to her, in strongly defending, and abundantly supplying her; so that she could set to her seal that it was true. Then she also asked him divers questions, relating to his travels and enjoyments, and he likewise answered her in a free and satisfactory manner; so that their affections began to grow warm towards one another. It was a very comfortable interview, and their minds were refreshed by each other's conversation.

And they appeared so agreeable one to another, that he began to think they might be pleasant and profitable companions all the way.

way. But first he retired for awhile, to deliberate on the conversation that had passed already, when the more he thought of her diligence in the pursuit of her journey, and her fixed satisfaction concerning the end of it; her understanding in those things, laid down in the guiding her experience in the way, and the delight she appeared to take in meditating on, and conversing about the joys of the city of habitation, &c. the more he was satisfied that she was a prince's daughter, travelling to the royal palace. And when he had lifted up his eyes to heaven, and earnestly besought the most high God for direction, and a blessing upon further conversation, he came again into her company. And after some further discourse, he asked the reason of her walking on her journey alone? She told him she found but few travelling the same road, and she did not think it expedient to turn aside, or neglect her way, for any company in the world. If she met with company, such as delighted in the ways of wisdom, she took pleasure therein; for by such company her heart was refreshed, and she thought herself strengthened in her journey thereby; but, otherwise, she chose rather to be alone, at leisure to divert himself in examining her map, viewing the springs by the way, with the fruit-trees and sweet flowers, hearing the singing of birds, and meditating on the

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glories

glories of her prince, and the joys she should have in his presence, &c. so that as company was pleasant when she could enjoy it, the delights in the way supplied the want of company when alone. And upon the whole, she neither was anxious to have company, nor had any aversion against it; her desire being to enjoy that only which might be most conducive to forward her in the right way.

Then he proposed, that since they had found each other's conversation comfortable and useful, it was his opinion, it might be for their mutual advantage to join together, and engage to keep company all the way. She told him it was not for persons of their profession to do any thing rashly; she would deliberate on it. So she retired and prostrated herself before the king her father, telling him the matter, imploring wisdom to direct, declaring herself willing to enjoy, or be denied of any thing, so it were according to his will, and might be for his honour. He told her she had already been informed, and well knew, what manner of persons they must be, with whom it would be expedient for kings daughters to keep company; therefore, if she found the person to be one of the blood-royal, and indued with princely qualities, she was at her full liberty; and moreover, by him, it should be

be esteemed honourable. So when these two lovers met again, and had deliberately consulted between themselves all such things as they conceived necessary relating to such an engagement, and had duly considered the king's statutes thereupon, and jointly petitioned his presence with them, and his blessing on their undertaking; they joined hands with great satisfaction and serenity of mind, rejoicing to see themselves preserved from so many snares, and thus happily joined together by a divine hand.

I then observed these two happy companions, pursuing their journey; and here I saw verified an ancient counsel (a helpmeet.) For they were sincere friends, pleasant companions, faithful partners, and useful assistants, to each other. If they met with difficulties by the way, they would take each other by the hand to support them. In dangers they would counsel, and stand by one another. In sorrows, they would sympathize, and comfort one another. If beset with enemies, one would watch while the other slept. If one were sick, the other would comfort with cordials. If one were indisposed in mind the other would divert with some sweet song, or discourse concerning the pleasant land. If one were at a loss, concerning any part of the way, the other would assist in searching and explaining

plaining the directions. If one were ready to turn aside, the other would caution and admonish of the danger. If one were employed in any service, the other would be ready to assist therein. If one found a refreshing spring by the way, would call the other to come and drink. If one found any refreshing fruit, sweet spices, or delightful flowers, would pluck and bring to the other. If one heard any joyful tidings, would come rejoicing, and tell the other. If one had any pleasant prospects of the kingdom, would endeavour to shew them to the other. If one was favoured with the audience of the king, would also remember and intercede for the other. And if one was blessed with any special favours, the other would congratulate and rejoice on the occasion, &c.

Then I was convinced, that two are better than one; and yet it is manifest, that they were no more twain; for I know not whether to call them, two souls dwelling in one body, or one soul inhabiting two bodies; but it appeared very conspicuous, that two were become one.

So I continued observing this united pair advancing in their way, for they greatly contributed to help each other forward; many difficulties they surmounted, and many rich blessings they enjoyed, as they travelled
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in the way. At last they arrived at a pleasant hill in view of the land of promise; full of delights, refreshing fruits, pure streams, and desirable entertainments. Here they sat down and rested in a delightful arbour, blessing God, and congratulating one another in consideration of their enjoyments. Then they went and refreshed themselves among the fruits and fountains, and afterwards they ascended to a tower, where was a large prospective glass, from whence they looked back upon *Babylon*, and saw it all in flames, and the country turned to burning pitch. They then gave praise and glory to God, for their wonderful deliverance, as well as for all the deliverances they had in the way. Then they took a prospect of the land before them, and saw *Jerusalem*, the royal palace, the goodly mountain of *Lebanon*, the clusters of *Eshcol*, and all the rivers flowing with milk, and the hills dropping down sweet wine. Then they looked below to the streams of *Jordan*, and beheld the high priest in his shining robes, waiting to carry them over. They also heard the inhabitants on the other side triumphing, singing, and shouting for joy. Then they also, with emulation, lifted up their voices in songs of praise, and transports of joy, to him that is, and that was, and that

is to come; which raised my mind to such an extasy, that I awoke, and behold it was a dream.

But the thing was certain—and the interpretation thereof was sure.

A N

A P P E N D I X

By the A U T H O R.

THE preceding essay, upon the effects of a well or ill-guided choice, in the affair of marriage, was first written and sent to a young man, in a private letter of advice, which I chose to put in the form of a dream; representing the case under a variety of figures, in order to convey a just idea of the advantages and disadvantages which naturally ensue. But many copies being dispersed among my acquaintance and others, and being importuned to publish it, I consented, after a number of years, to commit it to the press.

Parables

Parables and similitudes are intended as a *Whet* to the mind of the reader, to stimulate his attentive enquiry into the designed reality: And for these to be immediately explained, before they can be deliberately read, makes them flat and dry, and prevents the use of the allegorical figure; as for these pages upon marriage, my first design was, to make the similitude plain and easy, that it would naturally open itself to every attentive reader, without any further interpretation. Therefore, I shall only add a few thoughts by way of supplement, that they who do not understand the reveries of my sleep, may have a full view of my deliberate sentiments when awake. For, unto the same persons, from the same motives, and with the same designs that I first told the foregoing dream fourteen years ago, I now write the following address.

To all those that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, who being in a single state, but for sufficient reasons, judge it expedient to embrace the state of marriage, or to any individual of them, to whom my counsel may be acceptable, whether male or female, for they are all one in Christ,--- Love to your souls, fervent concern for your spiritual comfort, and earnest desire that God may be glorified in your lives, are the motives that excite this address to you; in which my
design

design simply is, to admonish you to beware of being entangled with such companions in the conjugal relation, as certainly will be heavy clogs, pricking thorns, and troublesome briars, to retard and incommode your walking with God.

If thou art born of God ; to enjoy his spiritual presence, and the light of his countenance, is thy superlative joy, thy ultimate delight? If thou art a believer in Jesus ; to bear his image, in righteousness and true holiness, is the inflexible, and incessant desire of thy soul? If thou art blessed with the indwelling of the holy ghost ; the glory of thy heavenly father is the tenderest point that can touch thy heart, and the most powerful spring that moves the whole series of thy life. Therefore, please to remember, that the marriage contract is the strongest obligation, the closest union, and for the longest period that nature is capable of. And if thou shouldest choose a bosom companion who is a stranger to thy God, will it not have a natural and an unavoidable tendency to interrupt thy communion with the lord of life, to infect thy mind with a carnal disposition, and be a perpetual remora to thy lively and diligent pursuit of those things whereby God might be glorified? And if thou art caught in a snare, through thine own imprudence, to make such a rash ad-
venture

venture, may it not cause thee to go softly all thy years in the bitterness of thy soul? *What concord hath Christ with Belial? What part hath he that believeth with an Infidel?*

If a foldier, after swearing allegiance to his king, and accepting a post in the army, should contract the most intimate friendship, enter into the closest engagements, and unite all the interest he has in the world, with a partisan in the enemy's camp, what would the prince think of such a man? would he not be deemed an impostor?---And are not all believers the foldiers of Jesus Christ? And all unbelievers the servants of sin?— Now, for a man to profess himself a servant of the Lord, devoted to Christ Jesus, to follow the lamb whithersoever he goeth, and yet to enter into such a solemn engagement, with one whose heart is enmity against God; is it not a glaring contradiction? Is it possible to avoid a suspicion of that man being an hypocrite in heart?--- Does not such a step plainly discover, either profound ignorance, to imagine that a believer and an unbeliever can possibly be comfortable companions, or insensibility to the comfort of his own soul, and the glory of God? Or else, that he is weary of his own profession, and thinks he shall have a handsome excuse to abandon it, when he shall have this to say, *I have married a Wife, and therefore I cannot?*

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But know, my dear friend, that in thy marriage choice it is not sufficient for thee to shun only those persons who are openly prophane, for many sober serious persons are seriously at enmity against the truth, as it is in Jesus. Nor yet, to avoid those of a different sect, or denomination; for thou may'st marry one of the same denomination with thyself (of whatever sect thou art) and still find thyself as destitute of a spiritual companion, as if thou hadst married a worshipper of *Diana*.---But thou art to consider the greatness of the enterprize, the importance of the undertaking, with the consequences which may attend it. And remember, that God made the woman to be an *Help-meet*, and such she certainly is, if wisely chosen; but it is impossible for a child of light to enjoy that blessing in a child of darkness. Therefore, look for one that knows and believes in Christ, loves and fears God, whom God hath called out of darkness into his marvellous light; these ought to be the first accomplishments in thy eye.--- I do not say, that thou canst search the heart, so as to be an infallible judge, who is, or who is not, *born of God*. But so far as the tree is known by its fruit, it is thy indispensable duty to make the most deliberate observation; to have a special regard to the person's profession and practice, as well as to what knowledge, faith, love, humility, &c. is manifest.

manifest. And let no inducements, as the gratification of thy own fancy, obliging thy friends, accommodating thyself in the world, &c. influence thy mind to palliate a circumstance which thou wilt certainly find to be of the utmost consequence to thy comfort, or discomfort, of any thing that can attend the matrimonial relation.---But, perhaps, thou wilt think me too sanguine in my admonitions, and too severe in my restrictions. I shall, therefore, address thee upon a more solid and authoritative ground, *the Word of God.*

That universal deluge of corruption, wickedness, and violence, which brought down the wrath of God in a universal deluge of water, was first introduced through mixed marriages, between those that professed to fear God, and those that feared him not. *The Sons of God saw the daughters of Men, that they were fair; and they took them Wives of all which they chose.*---Many conjectures, and some not a little extravagant, have been formed concerning these sons of God and the production of their marriages with the daughters of *Adam*. But they that read the history with simplicity and attention, may easily gather the truth of the relation. In the sacred language, the worshippers of the true God are distinguished from the rest of the world by this character, *Sons of God*, as we find in the book of *Job*, and

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frequently in the New Testament. And God has made a special promise, that they shall be called by his name, *Hof. i. 10.* But here it may be necessary to note, that the 5th chapter of *Genesis*, being a genealogy of the antediluvian patriarchs, and inserted in this place, stands as a parenthesis, and does not break the chain in which the 4th and 6th chapters stand inseparably connected, as an intire history; where the former ends, the latter begins.--In the close of the 4th chapter, we have this note, *Then began Men to call upon the name of the Lord*; not that the name of the Lord had never been called upon before, for *Abel*, righteously, and *Cain*, hypocritically had both called on his name. But, now, as the world began to increase, and prophaneness to abound, it is probable, that this was the time, when they that feared God, first began to separate themselves from the world, and (according to the light bestowed upon them) to worship God in social communities, bearing an open testimony against the prophane; and hence obtained that character, *the Sons of God*.--But the beginning of the 6th chapter informs us, how the defection came on, and apostacy took place: Then, from that strict separation, they or their descendents and proselytes, in process of time began to decline, and came into a more sociable and fashionable intimacy with their

their neighbours; entertaining more favourable opinions of their prophaneness; not locking upon the love, fear, and worship of God, as matters of such consequence, as to be a wall of partition; and so laid aside their former austerity and reservedness (with which, no doubt, their polite neighbours had often upbraided them) until the enmity between the seed of the serpent, and the seed of the woman, no longer appeared to subsist. This modish charity (always the bane of true Godliness) thus prevailing, and the friendship of the world being more in esteem than the glory of God; by the inter-marriages which ensued, they came all to one level, and the fear of God vanished out of the earth.

But some persons conjecture, that there must be something else in the case, because it is said, *there were Giants in the Earth in those Days*; but whether they were gigantick in stature, or in power and oppression, I leave to nicer criticks; allow them to be Giants in bulk, it is not certain, whether that proceeded from any thing unnatural in the generation, or was sent as a judgement from God. Neither is it expressly said, that these were the productions of those mixtures; but it is said, *when the Sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children*

dren unto them, the same became mighty men, which were of old, men of renown. And this is very easy to account for; for these children, having imbibed the wicked principles of their mothers, would naturally accommodate themselves to the prophane, and gain their respect, for the world will love its own. And on the other hand, it is too common with religious people to value persons very much, merely because they had devout fathers. Now these having seen the devotion of their fathers, might easily learn to mimic, and put on a form of Godliness, so as to gain reputation among the worshippers of God. Thus it was easy for them to grow great, by uniting families and interests; which has often been the case, and frequently is to this day, where religion is made a cloke to put on, or put off, as the time serves. And thus the degenerate offspring of devout persons, are commonly the authors of the greatest mischief.---*Abimelech* had the respect of the people, because he was the son of *Gideon*; but he was the son of an harlot, of an idolatrous city, whose wicked ways he learned, and so he usurped the kingdom in a manner most treacherous and bloody.---*Abshalom* was the Son of *David*, but his mother was a heathen princess, and he had learned the ways of the court of *Ge-shur*; yet he had the address to insinuate himself

himself into the affections of the people of *Israel*; of which he so far availed himself as to draw the whole kingdom into rebellion against his father.---Hence I see nothing in the history of these antediluvians, but effects arising from natural causes, of which, the first given, is mixed marriages.

After *Israel* entered the promised land; the first thing mentioned, as the occasion of their idolatry, and which laid the foundation of their ruin, was their intermarriages with the idolatrous inhabitants.--- The 2d chapter of the book of *Judges*, gives a general account of their revolting from the Lord, and of his dealing with them in consequence of their sin; but when the particulars of their apostacy come to be related, this is the very first instance, chap. iii. 6. *And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their Gods.*

If they married their persons, serving their Gods was certain to be the consequences:----- This the Lord foretold them; and for this very reason, gave such strict prohibitions in his law. *Exod. xxxiv. 15, 16. Lest thou make a Covenant with the inhabitants of the land---and thou take of their daughters unto thy Sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their Gods, and make thy Sons go a whoring after*

after their Gods. Deut. vii. 3, 4. Neither shalt thou make marriages with them: thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his Son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy Son. For they will turn away thy Son from following me, that they may serve other Gods. Josh. xxiii. 12, 13. If ye do in any wise-----make marriages with them, and go in unto them and they to you-----know for a certainty, that---- they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, &c. ---And that this was the inevitable consequence, when they violated these sacred precepts, is evident in many instances. 1 Kings xi. 2, 3. Of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their Gods: Solomon clave unto these in Love----And his wives turned away his heart. It is said of Ahab, 1 Kings xvi. 31. He took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbal, King of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him. chap. xxi. 25. There was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up. Yet Jehoshaphat, forgetting the law of his God, took a daughter of Ahab for a wife to his Son Jehoram; who proving a very wicked prince, this is given as a reason

son of it. *2 Kings* viii. 18. *For the daughter of Ahab was his wife.* And likewise his Son *Abaziah*, walking in the same wicked course, the reason given is this, *2 Chron.* xxii. 3. *For his mother was his counsellor to do wickedly.* And the wickedness of the people, priests, and levites, is ascribed to the same cause, *Ezra* ix. 2. *For they have taken of their daughters for themselves and for their Sons* ---- And see with what contrition this iniquity was confessed, by those that trembled at God's commandment, *Ezra* ix. 10---15. and with what zeal they opposed this flagrant violation of God's holy law, *Nehem.* xiii. 23---28.

But some will say the partition wall is now broken down, and no nation is to be called common, therefore, the prohibition is not so binding to christians, as it was to *Israel*.--- I confess, in the sight of God, there is no difference of nations, countries, or families; whether *Greek*, *Jew*, *Briton*, or *Hottentot*; but the irreconcilable separation between them that are after the flesh, and them that are after the spirit (of which, the separation between *Jews* and *Gentiles*, was but a shadow) is eternally radicated in the two seeds. Therefore, by so much as christians now, are blessed with superior light, the obligation to avoid every thing that may tend to corrupt

rupt the mind, from the simplicity that is in Christ, is more strictly binding.---But under the gospel, the prohibition is not national, but personal, 2 Cor. vi. 14. *Be ye not unequally yoked together with Unbelievers.* According to the Apostle's direction, those that are already married to unbelievers, are, in conscience, bound to fulfil their marriage covenant: But in his counsel to those that are unmarried, he lays down this salutary precept, 1 Cor. vii. 29. *Only in the Lord.*

And now, my friend, if thou hast an humble regard to the word of the living God, I am certain, I need say no more; If these few hints which I have laid before thee, may be blessed as a seasonable monition, to excite thee to set the Lord before thy face, so as to chuse an help-meet for thee, my end is answered; and may the blessing of thy God attend thee. Farewell.



J. JOHNSON.

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